DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 332 257 CS 507 468

AUTHOR Shapley, Barbara
TITLE Integrating Mass Media Instruction: "Connecting" NIE and TV Programs for the 21st Century.
PUB DATE May 91
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference on Newspapers in Education and Literacy (New Orleans, LA, May 15-17, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communications; *Critical Viewing; Futures (of Society); High Schools; High School Students; Instructional Innovation; Mass Media; *Mass Media Effects; *Mass Media Role; *Mass Media Use; Media Research; Popular Culture
IDENTIFIERS Channel One; *Media Education; *Media Literacy; Newspaper in Education Program

ABSTRACT

More high school students watch television regularly than read newspapers. Newspapers in Education coordinators should be involved in teaching their students critical viewing skills. The essential concepts that students need to learn are to: (1) understand what mass media and popular culture mean; (2) understand how the media shape attitudes and values; (3) understand the political and social implications of mass media in our society; (4) interpret persuasion techniques in print and electronic media; (5) examine and bring subliminal messages to the surface; (6) learn to "read" pictures and understand the power of visual images in society; (7) compare the various kinds of print media and contrast their intents and purposes; (8) analyze the various kinds of electronic media and contrast their intents and purposes; (9) understand that all media are constructions; and (10) understand how newspapers are made, how television programs are made, how film is made, and how recordings are made. Instructors should tackle an integrated, systematic approach for teaching mass media literacy--the United States is one of the few countries in the world where media literacy is not integrated into the school curriculum. (PRA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

CS

ED332257

CS507468

Integrating Mass Media Instruction:

"Connecting" NIE and TV Programs for the 21st Century

Materials/Handouts
Prepared By

Barbara Shapley
Mass Communications Consultant

Florida Department of Education
B-1 Collins Building
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Phone 904/488-7101
FAX 904/488-1392

Conference on Newspaper in Education and Literacy
ANPA Foundation
New Orleans, Fairmont Hotel
May 15-17, 1991

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Barbara Shapley

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INTEGRATED MASS MEDIA INSTRUCTION:
"CONNECTING" NIE AND TV PROGRAMS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

By now most Newspaper in Education professionals know about the study conducted by the Southeastern Educational Improvement Lab (SEIL). Titled "Tuning In On Current Events," this was the first research conducted to determine the effectiveness of television news programs--Channel 1 produced by Whittle Communications of Knoxville Tennessee and CNN Newsroom produced by Turner Educational Services of Atlanta, Georgia. The results showed that television news programs have minimal impact on high school students' knowledge of current events. The study involved 3000 high school students in Mississippi and North Carolina. Those who regularly read newspapers learned more about current events than students who merely watched the television news programs.

While newspapers wisely use the results of this study to laud NIE programs, here are some important questions and considerations:

Do most high school students read newspapers REGULARLY?

The SEIL study indicated that while 80 percent of high school students surveyed watch television news more than twice a week, only 50 percent read a newspaper more than twice a week. Because the purpose of the study was to research students' knowledge acquisition of current events, students involved in the study probably read newspapers more frequently than students not involved in a news-related study. From a Florida State University study conducted by Dr. Barbara Palmer in 1988, we know that students read and write better through newspaper-based instruction. The determining factor in both studies is HOW the newspapers are integrated into the curriculum. NIE coordinators know that their teacher-training activities must center on giving teachers immediate usable strategies for integrating newspapers into their curriculum. What NIE coordinators do in effect, is help teachers make students newspaper-literate.

How much do high school students regularly watch television, and how affected are they by advertising?

Studies indicate that many students watch some 1000 hours of television a year. The SEIL study showed that 50 percent of the students watched more than 3 hours of television on school nights and over 20 percent watched more than 5 hours each school night. This would then indicate that students are bombarded with commercials during that time. While the study further indicated that students can readily identify common forms of commercial advertising, no critical assessment of advertising is part of the school curriculum. The two minutes of commercial advertising from Whittle's Channel One is minimal when one considers the effects of all advertising on youngsters. No one disputes the power of television advertising, yet, newspapers are full of ads, and playing fields are traditionally covered with signs and slogans promoting products. The commercialism is an opportunity

for teachers to include critical assessment of advertising--in print and electronic media-- as part of the school curriculum, but few educators are taking advantage.

Why don't we teach students to interpret print and electronic media?

While NIE programs have been in existence since the 30's, in its fifty year history, there have been several movements to integrate television into the school curriculum areas. In the late 60's and early 70's, English teachers in Manatee County (Bradenton) Florida, called themselves "film groupies." Dr. Dan Nolan, now Director of Instruction for Manatee County schools, says, "We were there to start a revolution. The wave of the future had to be in film and television." What caused the revolution to fizzle? The basic skills movement of the 1970's, with its minimal competencies requirements, forced teachers into a skill-and-drill, teach-test-teach mode. Says Nancy Bullen, Language Arts Supervisor, "There is a widely held attitude among teachers, especially secondary English teachers, that a good teacher does not use much film or television." To basic skills advocates, film and video were trivial add-on's. Kids got to see the film only as a reward, and if there was enough time.

Many NIE coordinators may be reading this and thinking, "Yes, and I know some teachers who think the same way about using newspapers." The fact is schools are primarily a textbook-driven institution. As we approach the 21st century, the technology will demand that teachers let go of their textbook-driven methods and incorporate as many kinds of popular culture media as possible to get kids to "tune in" to school.

What is meant by mass media literacy? What are its components? How can Newspaper in Education Coordinators be involved?

Mass media literacy means the ability to "read" and interpret all of the mass media which pervades our culture. Newspapers remain a central print media institutionalized in our nation since the times of Ben Franklin. To be mass media literate means to be able to read a newspaper critically, understanding an editorial point of view, interpreting information and constructing meaning for oneself from that text. This same ability needs to transfer to all print media--including popular culture magazines, journals, posters, paperback books, billboards, signs and all other forms of visual media.

The electronic media--all genres of television and radio broadcasts-- audio and compact disc music, music television, computer multi-media productions such as laser-disc interactive video programs, must be included in the milieu of mass media that students need to learn to use and interpret. At this time in history, the information revolution is causing such rapid advances in delivery systems, i.e., satellite and telecommunications technology, that schools will have to change, no matter how much they resist the changes. All of us will have to change, to

"restructure" our thinking as we adapt. Restructuring schools means making walloping changes, beyond the reforms of the past. Our present schools are using a 19th century model as we propel into the 21st century!

Have any NIE programs made significant changes to adapt to the new technologies?

Last year, the Florida Newspaper in Education Coordinators focused on television news programs newly introduced in many schools. Dr. Lucy Levy of Turner Educational Services demonstrated CNN Newsroom, and Janet Dearden of Whittle Communications demonstrated Channel One. Tom Runner, currently an NIE Coordinator at PALM BEACH POST, was formerly at FORT MYERS NEWS PRESS. Tom reported that social studies teachers who were using CNN Newsroom were, ordering more newspapers than ever before, stating that "students wanted to know more...(about the news)."

Knight-Ridder Corporation is marketing a database connection for NIE programs. Called MEDIALINE, the program consists of providing online time on Dialog Information System along with Newspaper in Education subscriptions. Les Perry, formerly of THE MIAMI HERALD'S NIE Department developed and is managing this new program. By obtaining up-to-date information through a database, students can research the headlines, short-cutting long, tedious searches through card catalog indices and encyclopedias.

Why is television literacy the most important component of mass media literacy? Why do most teachers ignore teaching with and about television?

Because students spend so much of their lives with television, it is imperative that they be taught to interpret its form and content. Television news programs such as Channel One and CNN Newsroom are a very small part of a students' viewing day. Most teachers have not been educated themselves to teach mass media literacy. Mass media courses in high schools are the purview of the English department, and in Florida, many schools are reporting that the course "died" because it is not considered "a serious course of study for college-bound students."

What can teachers do to begin teaching critical viewing skills? Why should Newspaper in Education Coordinators be involved?

Teachers, NIE Coordinators and parents need to watch what kids watch. To analyze television, one needs to view actively, making note of how the media is constructed, what messages it imparts consciously and subliminally. Just as a critical newspaper reader looks for bias and fair reporting, and selects favorite columns and sections to read, a critical viewer needs to watch television analytically, determining cultural and sociological implications of the programs, and evaluating techniques which inform, persuade, entertain and educate. As new insights are assimilated, apply new understandings to different types of programs. As

an NIE Coordinator, you have expertise in working with mass media. You (and the management of your newspaper) need to get over the fear of television. Face it: TV is here to stay. Use snippets of off-air taping (legally) as a "grabber," then show its connection to the newspaper. Visual literacy means learning how to read pictures: photographs, graphs, graphic tables, maps--these are all in a newspaper.

What are the essential concepts we want students to learn?

Students need to

* understand what mass media and popular culture means,

* understand how the media shape our attitudes and values,

* understand the political and social implications of mass media in our society,

* interpret persuasion techniques in print and electronic media,

* examine and bring subliminal messages to the surface,

* learn to "read" pictures and understand the power of visual images in society,

* compare the various kinds of print media and contrast their intents and purposes,

* analyze the various kinds of electronic media and contrast their intents and purposes,

* understand that all media are constructions, and

* understand:

  - how newspapers are made
  - how television programs are made
  - how film is made
  - how recordings are made

In concluding, it seems that to suggest that we tackle an integrated, systematic approach for teaching mass media literacy would be so monumental a task as to be impossible. However, not only should we do this, it is imperative that we do this--on a grand scale. The United States is one of the few countries in the world where mass media literacy is not integrated into the school curriculum. Yet our students have access to more mass media programming than students anywhere else. Perhaps the greatest problem has been that television is so pervasive in our experience that we ignore its powerful impact.

To understand that multi-media laser disc technology, the marriage of print and electronic text, is already being installed in

schools is to know that a new age is not over the horizon, a new age is here. It's an exciting time, and one that newspapers can continue to be an important, yes, even essential element of its impact. Newspaper in Education Coordinators can be instigators in this great movement.